

OUR LORD'S QUESTION TO THE BLIND MEN

NO. 1355

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MAY 13, 1877,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

[On this occasion the Members of the regular Congregation left their seats to strangers.]

*“And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying and saying,
Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. And when he was come into the house,
the blind men came to him: and Jesus said unto them, Believe you
that I am able to do this? They said unto him,
Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying,
According to your faith be it unto you.
And their eyes were opened.”
Matthew 9:27-30.*

IN OUR own streets we meet here and there with a blind beggar, but they swarm in Eastern cities. Ophthalmia is the scourge of Egypt and Syria, and Volney declares that in Cairo, out of a hundred persons whom he met, twenty were quite blind, ten wanted one eye, and twenty others were more or less afflicted in that organ. At the present day everyone is struck with the immense number of the blind in oriental lands and things were probably worse in our Savior's times. We ought to be very grateful that leprosy, ophthalmia, and certain other forms of disease have been wonderfully held in check among us in modern times, so that the plague which devastated our city two hundred years ago is now unknown and our Lock hospitals are no longer crowded with lepers.

Blindness is now often prevented and frequently cured. And it is not, by any means, an evil of such frequent occurrence as to constitute a leading source of the poverty of the country. Because there were so many blind folk in our Savior's day and so many gathered around Him, we very commonly read of His healing the blind. Mercy met misery on its own ground. Where human sorrow was most conspicuous, divine power was most compassionate.

Now, in these days it is a very usual thing for men to be blind spiritually and therefore I have great hope that our Lord Jesus will act after His former manner and display His power amid the abounding evil. I trust there are some here at this hour who are longing to obtain spiritual sight, longing especially, like the two blind men in our text, to see Jesus, whom to see is everlasting life. We have come tonight to speak to those who feel their spiritual blindness and are pining for the light of God—the light of pardon, the light of love and peace, the light of holiness and purity.

Our eager desire is that the pall of darkness may be lifted, that the divine ray may find a passage into the soul's inner gloom and cause the night of nature to pass away forever. O that the moment of day-dawn may be just at hand to many of you who are “inly blind.” Immediate illumination is the blessing I implore upon you. I know that truth may abide in the memory for years and at last produce fruit, but at this time our prayer is for immediate results, for such only will be in accordance with the nature of the light of whereof we speak.

At the first, JEHOVAH did but say, “Let there be light,” and there was light, and when JEHOVAH Jesus sojourned here below, He did but touch the eyes of the blind and straightway they received sight. O for the like speedy work at this hour! Men who were led by the hand to Jesus, or groped their way along walls to the place where His voice proclaimed His presence, were touched by His finger and went home without a guide, rejoicing that Jesus Christ had opened their eyes. Such marvels Jesus is still able

to perform and depending upon the Holy Spirit, we will preach His Word and watch for the signs following, expecting to see them at once.

Why should not hundreds of you who came into this Tabernacle in nature's blackness go forth from it blessed with the light of heaven? This, at any rate, is our heart's inmost and uppermost desire, and at this we aim with concentrated faculties. Come with us, then, to the text and be at once friendly enough to yourselves to be willing to be affected by the truths which it will bring before you.

I. First, in explaining the passage before us, we must call your attention to THE SEEKERS themselves—the two blind men. There is something about them worthy of imitation by all who would be saved.

We notice at once that the two blind men were in *downright earnest*. The word which describes their appeal to Christ is, “crying,” and by this is not meant mere speaking, for they are represented as, “crying and saying.” Now, crying implies earnest, energetic, pathetic imploring, pleading, and beseeching. Their tones and gestures indicated that theirs was no holiday fancy, but a deep, passionate craving. Imagine yourselves in such a case. How eager you would be for the blessed light if for years you had been compelled to abide in what Milton called, “the ever-during dark.” They were hungering and thirsting after sight.

Now, we cannot hope for salvation till we seek it with equal vigor and yet how few are in earnest about being saved. How earnest some men are about their money, their health, or their children! How warm they are upon politics and parish business. But the moment you touch them upon matters of true godliness they are as cool as the Arctic snows. O sirs, how is this? Do you expect to be saved while you are half asleep? Do you expect to find pardon and grace while you continue in listless indifference? If so, you are woefully mistaken, for “the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force.”

Death and eternity, judgment and hell are not things to play with. The soul's eternal destiny is no small matter and salvation by the precious blood of Christ is no trifle. Men are not saved from going down into the pit by a careless nod or a wink. A mumbled, “Our Father,” or a hasty “Lord, have mercy upon me,” will not suffice. These blind men would have remained blind had they not been in earnest to have their eyes opened. And so, many continue in their sins because they are not in earnest to escape from them. These men were fully awake. Dear hearer, are you? Can you join with me in these two verses?

*“Jesus, who now art passing by,
Our Prophet, Priest, and King Thou art.
Hear a poor unbeliever's cry,
And heal the blindness of my heart.*

*Urging my passionate request,
Thy pardoning mercy I implore,
Whoe'er rebuke I will not rest,
Till Thou my spirit's sight restore.”*

The blind men were *thoroughly persevering* in consequence of being in earnest, for they “followed” Christ and so continued to urge their suit. How did they manage to follow the movements of the Lord? We do not know. It must have been very difficult, for they were blind, but they no doubt asked others the way which the Master had taken and they kept their ears open to every sound. Doubtless they said, “Where is He? Where is Jesus? Lead us. Guide us. We must find Him.” We do not know how far our Lord had gone, but we know this, that as far as He had gone they followed. They were so bravely persevering that having reached the house where He was, they did not stay outside waiting till He came out again, but they pressed into the room where He sat. They were insatiable for sight. Their earnest cries took Him off from His preaching, He paused and listened while they said, “Son of David, have mercy on us.”

Thus does perseverance prevail—no man shall be lost who knows the art of importunate prayer. If you will resolve never to leave the gate of mercy till the porter opens to you, he will assuredly unbar the door. If you grasp the covenant angel with this resolve, “I will not let You go except You bless me,” you shall come forth from the place of wrestling more than a conqueror. A mouth open in never-ceasing prayer shall bring about eyes open in full vision of faith. Pray, therefore, in the darkness, even if there be no hope of light, for when God who is light itself moves a poor sinner to plead and cry out before Him with the solemn intent to continue to do so till the blessing comes, He has no thought of mocking that poor crying heart. Perseverance in prayer is a sure sign that the day of the opening of the eyes is near.

The blind men *had a definite object* in their prayers. They knew what they wanted, they were not like children crying for nothing or greedy misers crying for everything. They wanted their sight and they knew it. Too many blind souls are unaware of their blindness and therefore when they pray, they ask for anything except the one thing needful. Many so-called prayers consist in saying very nice words, very pretty, pious sentences, but they are not prayers. Prayer, “to saved ones,” is communion with God and to persons seeking salvation, it is asking for what you need and expecting to receive it through the name of Jesus, whose name you plead with God.

But what sort of prayer is that in which there is no sense of need, no direct asking, no intelligent pleading? Dear hearer, have you in distinct terms asked the Lord to save you? Have you expressed your need of a new heart, your need of being washed in the blood of Christ, your need of being made God's child, and adopted into His family? There is no praying till a man knows what he is praying for and sets himself to pray for *it*, as if he cared for nothing else. If being already earnest and importunate, he is also instructed and full of definite desires, he is sure to succeed in his pleading. With a strong arm he draws the bow of desire and fits upon the string the sharp arrow of passionate longing, and then with the instructed eye of perception, he takes deliberate aim and therefore we may expect that he will hit the very center of the target. Pray for light, life, forgiveness, salvation, and pray for these with all your soul and as surely as Christ is in heaven, He will give these good gifts to you. Whom did He ever refuse?

These blind men in their prayers *honored Christ*, for they said, “Thou Son of David have mercy on us.” The great ones of the land were loath to recognize our Lord as being of the royal seed, but these blind men proclaimed the Son of David right lustily. They were blind, but they could see a great deal more than some with sharp eyes, for they could see that the Nazarene was the Messiah, sent of God to restore the kingdom unto Israel. They gathered from this belief that, as the Messiah was to open blind eyes, Jesus, being the Messiah, could open *their* blind eyes, and so they appealed to Him to perform the tokens of His office, thus honoring Him by a real, practical faith.

This is the manner of prayer which will always speed with heaven, the prayer which crowns the Son of David. Pray, glorifying Christ Jesus in your prayers, making much of Him, pleading much the merit of His life and death, giving Him glorious titles because your soul has a high reverence and a vast esteem of Him. Jesus-adoring prayers have in them the force and swiftness of eagles' wings, they must ascend to God, for the elements of heavenly power are abundant in them. Prayer which makes little of Christ is prayer which God will make little of, but the prayer in which the soul glorifies the Redeemer rises like a perfumed pillar of incense from the Most Holy place and the Lord Himself smells a sweet savor.

Observe also that these two blind men in their prayer *confessed their unworthiness*. “Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.” Their sole appeal was to mercy. There was no talk about merit, no pleading of their past sufferings, or their persevering endeavors, or their resolves for the future, but, “Have mercy on us.” He will never win a blessing from God who demands it as if he had a right to it. We must plead with God as a condemned criminal appeals to his sovereign, asking for the exercise of the royal prerogative of free pardon. As a beggar asks for alms in the street by pleading his need of it and requesting a gift for charity's sake, so must we apply to the Most High, appealing *ad misericordiam* and directing our supplication to the lovingkindness and tender mercy of the Lord.

We must plead after this fashion, "O God, if You destroy me, I deserve it. If never a comfortable look should come from Your face to me, I cannot complain. But save a sinner, Lord, for mercy's sake. I have no claim upon You whatsoever, but oh, because You are full of grace, look on a poor blind soul that fain would look on You."

My brethren, I cannot put fine words together. I have never occupied myself in the school of oratory. In fact, my heart abhors the very idea of seeking to speak finely when souls are in peril. No, I labor to speak straight home to your hearts and consciences, and if there be in this listening throng any who are listening in the right manner, God will bless the Word to them. "And what kind of listening is that?" say you. Why, that in which the man says, "As far as I perceive that the preacher delivers God's Word, I will follow him and I will do what he describes the seeking sinner as doing. I will pray and plead tonight and I will persevere in my entreaties, laboring to glorify the name of Jesus, and at the same time confessing my own unworthiness. Thus, even thus, will I crave mercy at the hands of the Son of David." Happy is the preacher if he knows that such will be the case.

II. Now, we will pause a minute and note, secondly, THE QUESTION WHICH WAS PUT TO THEM.

They sought to have their eyes opened. They both stood before the Lord, whom they could not see, but who could see *them* and could reveal Himself to them by their hearing. He began to question them, not that *He* might know them, but that they might know themselves. He asked only one question, "Believe you that I am able to do this?" That question touched the only thing which stood between them and sight. On their answer depended whether they should go out of that room seeing men or blind. "Believe you that I am able to do this?" Now, I believe that between every seeking sinner and Christ there is only this one question, "Believe you that I am able to do this?" And if any man can truly answer as the men in the narrative did, "Yes Lord," he will assuredly receive the reply, "According to your faith be it unto you."

Let us look, then, at this very weighty question with very serious attention. It concerned *their faith*. "Believe you that I am able to do this?" He did not ask them what kind of characters they had been in the past, because when men come to Christ the past is forgiven them. He did not ask them whether they had tried various means of getting their eyes opened, because whether they had or had not, they were still blind. He did not ask them even whether they thought there might be a mysterious physician who would effect a cure in a future state. No. Curious questions and idle speculations are never suggested by the Lord Jesus.

His inquiries were all resolved into a trial upon one point and that one point is faith. Did they believe that He, the Son of David, could heal them? Why does our Lord everywhere, not only in His ministry, but in the teaching of the apostles, always lay such stress upon faith? Why is faith so essential? It is because of its receptive power. A purse will not make a man rich and yet without some place for his money, how could a man acquire wealth? Faith of itself could not contribute a penny to salvation, but it is the purse which holds a precious Christ within itself, yea, it holds all the treasures of divine love.

If a man is thirsty, a rope and a bucket are not in themselves of much use to him, but yet, sirs, if there is a well near at hand, the very thing that is wanted is a bucket and a rope, by means of which the water can be lifted. Faith is the bucket by means of which a man may draw water out of the wells of salvation and drink to his heart's content. You may sometimes have stopped a moment at a street fountain and have desired to drink, but you found you could not, for the drinking cup was gone. The water flowed, but you could not get at it. It was tantalizing to be at the fountainhead and yet to be thirsty still for want of a little cup.

Now faith is that little cup which we hold up to the flowing stream of Christ's grace. We fill it and then we drink and are refreshed. Hence the importance of faith. It would have seemed to our forefathers an idle thing to lay down a cable under the sea from England to America, and it would be idle now if it were not that science has taught us how to speak by lightning—yet the cable itself is now of the utmost

importance—for the best inventions of telegraphy would be of no use for purposes of transatlantic communication if there were not the connecting wire between the two continents.

Faith is just that—it is the connecting link between our souls and God, and the living message flashes along it to our souls. Faith is sometimes weak and comparable only to a very slender thread, but it is a very precious thing for all that, for it is the beginning of great things. Years ago they were wanting to throw a suspension bridge across a mighty chasm, through which flowed far down a navigable river. From crag to crag it was proposed to hang an iron bridge aloft in the air, but how was it to be commenced? They shot an arrow from one side to the other and it carried across the gulf a tiny thread. That invisible thread was enough to begin with. The connection was established. By-and-by, the thread drew a piece of twine, the twine carried after it, a small rope, the rope soon carried a cable across and all in good time came the iron chains and everything else that was needed for the permanent way.

Now, faith is often very weak, but even in that case it is still of the utmost value, for it forms a communication between the soul and the Lord Jesus Christ. If you believe in Him, there is a link between Him and you. Your sinfulness rests on His grace. Your weakness hangs on His strength. Your nothingness hides itself in His all-sufficiency. But if you believe not, you are apart from Jesus and no blessing can flow to you. So the question that I have to address, in my Master's name tonight to every seeking sinner has to do with his faith and nothing else. It does not matter to me whether you are a hundred thousand pounds man or whether you earn a few shillings a week, whether you are a peer or a pauper, whether you are royal or rustic, learned or ignorant. We have the same Gospel to deliver to every man, woman, and child, and we have to lay the stress upon the same point, "Believe you?" If you believe, you shall be saved, but if you believe not, you can not partake of the blessings of grace.

Notice, next, that the question concerned *their faith in Jesus*. "Believe you that *I* am able to do this?" If we were to ask the awakened sinner, "Do you believe that you can save yourself?" his answer would be, "No, that I do not. I know better. My self-sufficiency is dead." If we were then to put the question to him, "Believe you that ordinances and means of grace and sacraments can save you?" if he is an intelligent, awakened penitent, he will reply, "I know better. I have tried them, but in and of themselves they are utter vanity." Truly it is so, there remains in us and around us nothing upon which hope can build, even for an hour.

But the inquiry passes beyond self and casts us upon Jesus only, by bidding us hear the Lord Himself say, "Believe you that I am able to do this?" Now, beloved, we are not talking concerning a merely historical person when we speak about the Lord Jesus Christ. We speak of one who is above all others. He is the Son of the Highest and yet He came to this earth and was born a babe at Bethlehem. He slept upon a woman's bosom and grew up as other children do. He became a man in fullness of stature and wisdom, living here for thirty years or more, doing good.

At the last, this glorious God in human flesh, "died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," standing in the room and place and stead of guilty man, that He might bear man's punishment—that God might be just and yet the justifier of him that believes. He died and was buried, but only for a short time could the grave contain Him. Early in the morning of the third day He rose and left the dead, no more to die. He tarried here sufficiently long for many to see Him alive and really in the body.

No event in history is so well authenticated as the resurrection of Christ. He was seen by individuals alone, and by twos and twenties, and by above five hundred brethren at once. After having lived here a little while, He ascended up into heaven in the presence of His disciples, a cloud receiving Him out of their sight. At this moment He is sitting at the right hand of God in human flesh—that selfsame man who died upon the tree is now enthroned in the highest heavens, Lord of all and every angel delights to do Him homage.

The one question which *He* asks of you tonight, through these poor lips is this, "Believe you that I am able to save you—that I, the Christ of God now dwelling in heaven, am able to save you?" Everything depends upon your answer to that question. I know what your answer ought to be. Surely, if He be God, nothing is impossible or even difficult to Him. If He has laid down His life to make

atonement, and God has accepted that atonement by permitting Him to rise from the dead, then there must be efficacy in His blood to cleanse me, even me. The answer ought to be, "Yea, Lord Jesus, I believe that You are able to do this."

But now I want to lay stress on another word of my text and I want *you* to lay stress on it, too. "Believe you that I am able to do *this*?" Now, it would have been of no use for these blind men to say, "We believe that You can raise the dead." "No," says Christ, "the matter at hand is the opening of your eyes. Believe you that I am able to do *this*?" They might have replied, "Good Master, we believe that You did staunch the woman's issue when she touched Your garment." "No," says He, "that is not the question. Your eyes have now to be attended to. You need sight and the question about your faith is, believe you that I am able to do *this*?"

Ah, some of you can believe for other people, but we must bring the question more fully home to you and say, "Believe you that Christ is able to save *you*—even *you*? Is He able to do *this*?" Possibly I address someone who has gone very far in sin. It may be, my friend, you have crowded a great deal of iniquity into a short space. You went in for a short life and a merry one, and according to your present prospects you are likely enough to have a short life, but the merriment is pretty nearly over with you already and as you look back upon your life, you reflect that never did a young man or a young woman throw life away more foolishly than you have done.

Now then, do you desire to be saved? Can you say from your heart that you do? Answer me, then, this further question, Do you believe that Jesus Christ is able to do *this*, namely, to blot out all *your* sins, to renew *your* heart, and to save *you* tonight? "Oh, sir, I do believe He is able to forgive sin." But believe you that He is able to forgive *your* sin? You, yourself are the case in hand. How holds your faith on that point? Let the cases of others alone just now and consider yourself. Believe you that He is able to do *this*? *This*—this sin of yours, this misspent life—is Jesus able to cope with *this*? On your answer to that question everything depends. It is an idle faith which dreams of believing in the Lord's power over others, but then declares that it has no confidence in Him for itself. You must believe that He is able to do *this*—this which concerns you or you are for all practical purposes an unbeliever.

I know I am speaking to a great many persons who never did go into the vices of the world. I thank God on your behalf that you have been kept in the ways of morality and sobriety and honesty. Yet I have known that some of you almost wish, or at least it has occurred to you that you might almost wish—that you had been great, open sinners, that you might be preached to as open sinners are, and that you might see a change in yourself equal to what you have seen in some of them, about whose conversion you can never doubt.

Do not indulge in so unwise a wish, but listen while I put this question to you also. Your case is that of a moralist who has obeyed every outward duty, but has neglected his God—the case of a moralist who feels as if repentance were to him impossible, because he has been so long eaten up with self-righteousness that he knows not how to cut out the gangrene. The Lord Jesus Christ can as easily save you from your self-righteousness as He can save another from his guilty habits. Do you believe that He is able to do *this*? Come now, do you believe that He is able to meet *this*, your own peculiar case? Give me a "yes" or a "no" to this question.

"Alas," cries one of you, "my heart is so hard." Do you believe that He can soften it? Suppose it is as hard as granite—do you now believe that the Christ of God can turn it into wax in a moment? Suppose your heart is as fickle as the wind and waves of the sea—can you believe that He can make you stable-minded and settle you upon the Rock of Ages forever? If you believe in Him, He will do this for you, for according to your faith shall it be unto you. But I know the pinch lies here. Everybody tries to run away to the thought that he does believe in Christ's power for others, but he trembles for himself. But I must hold each man to the point which concerns himself. I must buttonhole you and bring you to the real test. Jesus asks each one of you, "Believe you that I am able to do *this*?"

"Why," says one, "it would be the most surprising thing that the Lord Jesus ever did if He were to save me tonight." Do you believe that He can do it? Will you trust Him to do it now? "But it will be

such a strange thing, such a miracle!" The Lord Jesus works strange things, it is the way of Him. He was ever a miracle-worker. Can you believe Him able to do this for you, even this, which is now needed to save you?

It is wonderful, the power which faith has—power over the Lord Jesus Himself. I have often experienced in my little way how confidence will master you. Have you not frequently been conquered by the trustfulness of a tiny child? The simple request was too full of trust to be refused. Have you ever been grasped by a blind man at a street crossing who has said to you, "Sir, would you take me across the road?" And then, perhaps, he has said somewhat cunningly, "I know by the tone of your voice that you are kind. I feel I can trust myself with you." At such a time you have felt that you were in for it—you could not let him go.

And when a soul says to Jesus, "I know You can save me, my Lord. I know You can, therefore in You do I trust," why He cannot shake you off. He cannot wish to do so, for He has said, "Him that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out." I sometimes tell a story to illustrate this. It is a simple tale enough, but it shows how faith wins everywhere. Many years ago my garden happened to be surrounded by a hedge, which looked green, but was a poor protection. A neighbor's dog was very fond of visiting my garden and as he never improved my flowers, I never gave him a cordial welcome.

Walking along quietly one evening, I saw him doing mischief. I threw a stick at him and advised him to go home, but how did the good creature reply to me? He turned round and wagged his tail, and in the merriest manner picked up my stick and brought it to me, and laid it at my feet. Did I strike him? No, I am not a monster. I should have been ashamed of myself if I had not patted him on the back and told him to come there whenever he liked. He and I were friends directly, because, you see, he trusted me and conquered me.

Now, simple as the story is, that is just the philosophy of a sinner's faith in Christ. As the dog mastered the man by confiding in him, so a poor guilty sinner does, in effect, master the Lord Himself by trusting Him when he says, "Lord, I am a poor dog of a sinner and You might drive me away, but I believe You to be too good for that. I believe You can save me, and lo! I trust myself with You. Whether I am lost or saved, I trust myself with You." Ah, dear heart, you will never be lost if you thus trust. He who trusts himself with Jesus has given the answer to the question, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" and there is nothing now left but for him to go his way and rejoice, for the Lord has opened his eyes and saved him.

III. Now, thirdly, THAT QUESTION WAS A VERY REASONABLE ONE.

"Believe you that I am able to do this?" Just a minute, let me show that it was a very reasonable question for Christ to put and equally reasonable for me to urge home upon many here present. Our Lord Jesus might have said, "If you do not believe that I am able to do this, *why did you follow Me?* Why did you follow *Me* more than anybody else? You have been after Me down the streets and you have come into this house after Me. Why have you done this if you do not believe that I am able to open your eyes?"

So a large proportion of you who are here tonight attend a place of worship. You like to be there, but why, if you do not believe Jesus? What do you go there for? Do you go to seek a Savior who cannot save you? Do you foolishly seek after one in whom you cannot trust? I have never heard of such madness as for a sick man to run after a doctor in whom he has no confidence. And do you come here tonight and attend your places of worship at other times without having any faith in Jesus? Then why do you come? What inconsistent people you must be.

Again, these blind men had been praying to Jesus to open their eyes, but *why did they pray?* If they did not believe that Jesus could heal them, their prayers were a mockery. Would you ask a man to do a thing which you knew he could not do? Must not prayer always be measured by the quantity of faith that we put into it? Now I know that some of you have been in the habit of prayer ever since you were little children. You scarcely ever go to bed at night without repeating the form of prayer your mother taught

you. Why do you do that if you do not believe that Jesus Christ can save you? Why ask Him to do what you do not believe He can do? What strange inconsistency—to pray without faith!

Moreover, these two blind men had called Jesus Christ the “Son of David.” Why had they thus *confessed His Messiahship*? The most of you do the same. I suppose that out of this congregation there are very few who doubt the deity of Christ. You believe in the Word of God—you do not doubt that it is inspired—you believe that Jesus Christ has lived and died and gone into His glory. Well, then, if you do not believe that He is able to save you, what do you mean by saying that He is God? God and yet not able? A dying, bleeding, atoning, sacrifice, and yet not able to save? Oh, man, your nominal creed is not your true one. If you were to write your true creed out it would run something like this, “I do not believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God or that He has made a full atonement for sin, for I do not believe that He is able to save me.” Would not that be correct and all of a piece?

Well, then, I charge you by your frequent hearings of the Word, by your habitual prayers, and by your profession of being believers in that grand old Bible, answer me—How is it that you do not believe in Jesus? Sirs, He must be able to save you. Do you know it is some seven-and-twenty years or more since I put my trust in Him and I must speak of Him as I find. In every hour of darkness, in every season of despondency, in every time of trial, I have found Him faithful and true. And as to trusting Him with my soul, if I had a thousand souls I would trust them with Him and if I had as many souls as there are sands upon the seashore, I would not ask for a second Savior, but would just put them all into that dear hand which was pierced with the nail, that He might grasp me and hold me fast forever. He is worthy of your trust and your trust is all He asks of you. Knowing that He is able—and you cannot doubt that He is willing, seeing that He has died—He asks you to act upon your belief that He is able to save you and trust yourself to Him.

IV. Now, I must not detain you much longer and therefore I want you to notice THE ANSWER which these blind men gave to His question.

They said to Him, “Yea, Lord.” Well, now, I have been pressing that question upon you and I again repeat it. Believe you that Christ is able to save *you*, that He is able to do this, to touch your case in all its specialty? Now for your answer. How many will say, “Yea, Lord”? I am half inclined to ask you to say it aloud, but I will rather beg you to say it in your secret souls—“Yea, Lord.” And now may God the Holy Spirit help you to say it very *distinctly*, without any holding back and mental reservation, “Yea, Lord. Blind eye, dumb tongue, cold heart—I believe that You are able to change them all and I rest myself on You, to be renewed by Your divine grace.” Say it and mean it. Say it decidedly and distinctly, with your whole heart, “Yea, Lord.”

Notice that the two men replied *immediately*. The question was no sooner out of Christ's mouth than they gave the answer, “Yea, Lord.” There is nothing like being prompt in your answers, for when you ask a man a question and you say, “Believe you that I am able to do this?” and he stops, rubs his forehead, strokes his head, and at last says, “Y-y-yes,” does not such a “yes” sound uncommonly like “no”? The best “yes” in the world is the “yes” which leaps forth directly.

“Yes, Lord, bad as I am, I believe You can save me, for I know Your precious blood can take away every stain. Though I am an old sinner, though I am an aggravated sinner, though I am one who has gone back from a profession of religion, and have played the backslider's part, though I seem to be an outcast from society, though I do not at this time feel as I could wish to feel, and am the very reverse of what I ought to be, yet I do believe that if Christ has died for sinners, that if the eternal Son of God has gone into heaven to plead for sinners, then He must be ‘able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him,’ and I come to God tonight by Him and I do believe that He is able to save even me.” That is the kind of answer which I long to get from you all. May the Spirit of God produce it!

V. Then see OUR LORD'S RESPONSE to their answer.

He said, “According to your faith be it unto you.” As much as if He had said—If you believe in Me there is light for your blind eyes. So true the faith, so true the sight. If you believe decidedly and fully, you shall not have one eye opened or both eyes half opened, but all your sight shall be given to you.

Decided faith shall clear away every speck and make your vision strong and clear. If your answer is quick, so shall My answer be. You shall see in a moment, for you at once believed.

The Lord's power just kept touch with their faith. If their faith was true, His cure was true. If their faith was complete, His cure was complete and if their faith said, "yes," directly, He give them sight directly. If you are a long while in saying, "yes," you will be a long while in getting peace, but if you say tonight, "I will venture it, for I see it is so. Jesus must be able to save me. I will give myself up to Him." If you do that at once, you shall have instantaneous peace—yes, in that very seat, young man, you who are burdened tonight shall find rest. You shall wonder where the burden has gone and look round and find that it has vanished, because you have looked to the Crucified One and trusted all your sins with Him. Your bad habits, which you have been trying in vain to conquer, which have forged fresh chains to hold you fast, you shall find them fall from off you, like spiders' webs. If you can but trust Jesus to break them and give yourself up to Him to be renewed by Him, it shall be done and done tonight and heaven's eternal arches shall ring with shouts of sovereign grace.

Thus I have put the whole matter before you. My only hope is that God the blessed Spirit will lead you to seek as the blind men sought, and especially to trust as they trusted.

This last word. There are some persons who are specially diligent in finding out reasons why they should not be saved. I have battled with some such by the half-hour together and they always finish up with, "Yes, that is true, sir, but"—and then we try and chop that "but" to pieces, but after a while they find another and say, "Yes, I now see that point, but"—so they buttress their unbelief with "buts." If anybody here should be willing to give you a thousand pounds, can you tell me any reason why he should not? Well, I fancy if he were to come to you and present you with a bank note for that amount you would not worry yourself to discover objections. You would not keep on saying, "I should like the money, but"—no, if there were any reason why you should not have it, you would let other people find it out. You would not labor and cudgel your brains to try and find out arguments against yourself—you are not so much your own enemy.

And yet with regard to eternal life, which is infinitely more precious than all the treasures of this world, men act most absurdly and say, "I earnestly desire it and Christ is able to do it, but"—What folly is this to argue against yourself. If a man were in Newgate, condemned to die, and had to stand upon the drop tomorrow morning, and the sheriff came and said, "There is a free pardon for you," do you think that man would begin to object? Would he cry, "I should like another half-hour to consider my case and find out reasons why I should not be pardoned"? No, he would jump at it. Oh that you may also jump at the pardon tonight. The Lord grant that you may feel such a sense of danger and guilt that you may promptly cry, "I do believe; I will believe in Jesus."

Sinners are not half as sensible as sparrows. David said in one of the psalms, "I watch and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop." Well, have you noticed the sparrow? He keeps his eyes open and the moment he sees a grain of wheat or anything to eat down in the road, he flies to get it. I never knew him wait for someone to invite him, much less to beg and beseech him to come and feed. He sees the food and he says to himself, "Here is a hungry sparrow and there is a piece of bread. Those two things go well together—they shall not be long apart." Down he flies and eats up all he can find as fast as he finds it. Oh, if you had half the sense of the sparrow, you would say, "Here is a guilty sinner and there is a precious Savior. These two things go well together—they shall not be long apart. I believe in Jesus and Jesus is mine."

The Lord grant that you may find Jesus tonight before you leave this house. I pray you may. In these very pews and aisles may you look to Jesus Christ and believe. Faith is only a look, a look of simple trust. It is reliance, a believing that He is able to do this, and a trusting in Him to do it and to do it now. God bless every one of you and may we meet in heaven, for Christ's sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—MATTHEW 9:18-38
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—100, 539, 555.

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